The Pre-War Years

Bode s aim was to have most of his personnel out in the field on the firing line, as he expressed it. He preferred to have a minimal staff in the Central Office and the bulk of the Department s personnel actually working with citizens on the land. It was the old extension philosophy.

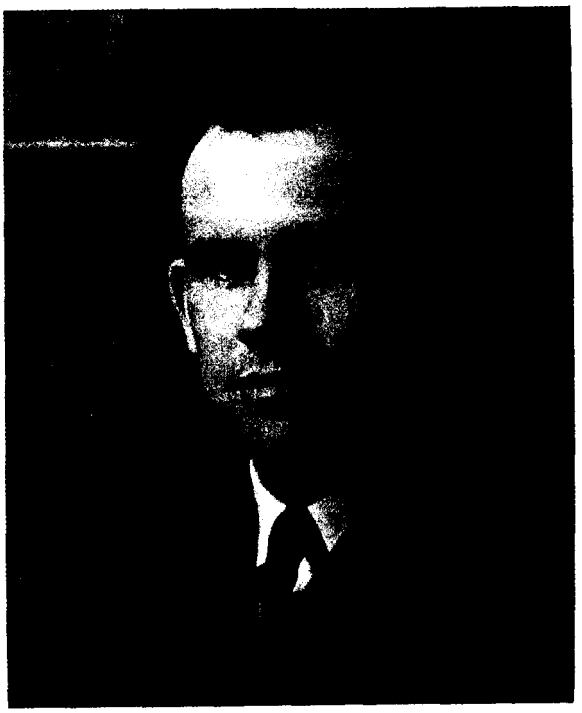
A primary assignment of the biologists, or project leaders, was to bring together the various sportsmen s groups and landowners into cooperative wildlife projects. These were only partially effective. Landowners were interested mostly in controlling trespass problems, and sportsmen were mainly interested in *harvesting* wildlife, not in working to increase it. There were exceptions, of course, but the cooperative wildlife projects were mainly failures. Both landowners and sportsmen tended to put too much faith in creation of refuges, which biologists believed were of value only in special circumstances. Farmers wanted refuges for quail and rabbits, but more to control trespass problems than to restore wildlife.

Sportsmen put faith in refuges, believing that without hunting, quail and rabbit numbers would dramatically increase and spill out onto surrounding lands. Biologists knew that whether they were hunted or not, wildlife like quail and rabbits have a high population turnover each year, and that there would be no big build-up beyond the carrying capacity of the land. That was a term that farmers and sportsmen heard increasingly-carrying capacity-the amount of wildlife a given area of land could support. Biologists tried to urge farmers and sportsmen to work together to increase the carrying capacity of the land, but insisted that a part of each year s quail and rabbit crop should be hunted, as it would die anyway.

Much of the public still thought in terms of stocking fish and wildlife, but the Department was determined to develop programs utilizing natural reproduction and to play down stocking as a management measure. Stocking was effective for species like deer and wild turkey, but mostly ineffective for short-lived species like quail and rabbits. It was difficult to explain the difference to ordinary citizens, who had become accustomed to stocking programs.

In the case of fish, one successful spawning season in a stream could provide more fish than could be stocked by artificial means. Yet the public had seen hatchery trucks dumping fish into streams for years. This led to a lot of controversy and the biologists were on their mettle to prove themselves. The politicians stood in the wings, eager to grab on to any controversy between the Department and its public, so emphasis was placed on trying to educate the public to these new concepts and on programs that would show some immediate gains.

Biologist Harold V. Terrill is credited with



Biologist Harold V. Ten-ill, pictured here in 1941, is credited with initiating the farm pond program that soon studded the landscape with 150,000 ponds.

recognizing the value that farm ponds could have for wildlife and, even though ponds were only one aspect of the cooperative wildlife management programs, it soon became the dominant one, Once the federal government support programs began underwriting farm ponds, the idea took off-in a relatively short time Missouri had 150,000 farm ponds dotting the landscape.

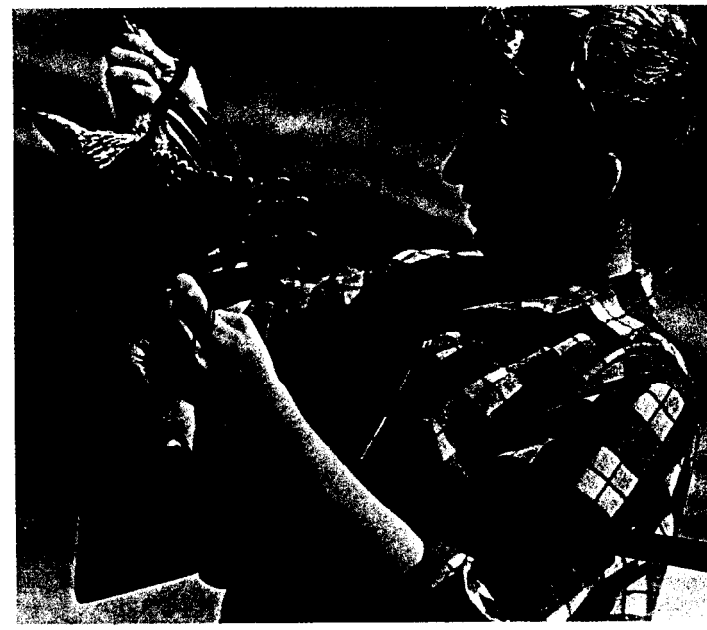
But, it wasn t long before it became obvious that prairie chickens, deer and wild turkey needed special study. Bode at first thought the University of Missouri s Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit would handle all the basic wildlife research, but he became convinced that problems needing immediate attention should be addressed by Department biologists. It was also found that individual biologists had their own interests and abilities that could be utilized to the benefit of the Department. Thus, Charles W. Schwartz was given the task of learning as much about prairie chickens as he could, and to make recommendations on their management. This work resulted in the Department s first book-publishing venture in 1944, when it published Schwartz s *The* **Prairie** Chicken *in Missouri.*

Biologist David Spencer took on deer restoration as a project, and Starker Leopold was hired and assigned to wild turkey studies. The Department had been stocking semi-wild turkeys in some areas and Leopold s work revealed that this was a waste of time and money.

Biologist Hugh Denney had a flair for synthesizing information and for long-range planning. He was eventually taken off his field assignment and given the task of developing a wildlife survey based on soils, which he believed were basic to any restoration of wildlife. While he was at it he produced the state's—and nation s-first forest cover map.

Denney also started the comprehensive Meramec Watershed Study to serve as a basis for the Department s decisions on the dam on that river which had been proposed in

The first farm pond was built on the M. W. Voss farm near Linn in 1941. Voss family members watch as Department personnel inspect the pond. From left **to right, they** *are Charles Schwartz, Starker Leopold (kneeling), Carl Noren, Reed Twichell, David Spencer, Paul Barnickol, Dr. Paul Dalke, R. G. Ranney, Bill Crawford, Bruce Lewis, Paul Tulenko, A. Hugh Denney, Willard Barbee, Wallace Gray,* **Jay** ***Morrow,*** *Kenneth Rowe,* **Stirling** *Kyd* **and Harold** *Terrill.*



Research on **prairie** *chickens by Charles Schwartz extended from Wisconsin to Missour-i and led to the publication in 1944* **of The Prairie Chicken in Missouri.**

The same Voss farm pond, more than forty years later, is still owned by the Voss family. It continues **to** ***provide a peaceful panorama, and home and habitatfor a host of wildlife.***

These 1941 photos show the home base for wildlife researchers staying at the Caney Mountain Wildlife Refuge. Restoration work on deer and wild turkey were under way at this time.

Biologist Starker Leopold, who specialized in wild *turkey research, found a few moments to relax during a* project *at* Caney Mountain *Wildlife Refuge* in *the early 1940s.*

1936. Denney left the Department before that study was completed and Biologist Bill T. Crawford took it to its conclusion. Lisle Jeffrey was especially good at dealing with the public and handling correspondence, so he was brought into the Central Office to assist Arthur Clark and became the state leader of the federal aid crew.

Research wasn t limited to game animals, however. The first fisheries biologist was hired and assigned to study Lake of the Ozarks. Fishing there had fallen into the doldrums following the first few years bonanza, and Albert E. Weyer was hired at $100 a month and told to find out what could be done to improve fishing. Weyer may not have originated the phrase biological desert, but he is supposed to have applied it first-and incorrectly-to Lake of the Ozarks.

A few months later Dr. W. C. Frohne was hired as an aquatic biologist and he set up the state s first comprehensive stream survey.

The Commission, in June, 1939, also adopted a policy statement on the construction of dams on Missouri streams, a statement that remained essentially unchanged for many years:

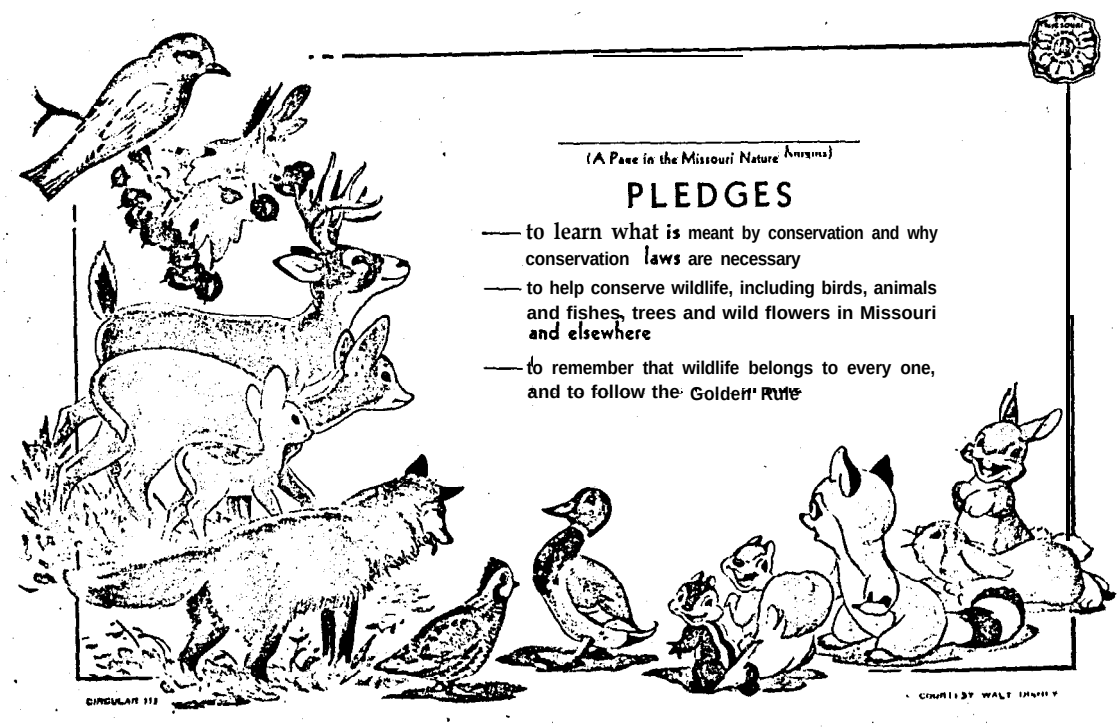
The Conservation Commission is charged by the Constitution of the state of Missouri with the duty of restoring and conserving the bird, fish, game, forestry and all wildlife resources of the state. The Commission, therefore, will endeavor to advise the people as to the significance and effect upon these resources of the construction of dams in the streams of the state, or as to the significance and effect of other water-control projects, such as flood control, sanitation, or drainage, and it will not concur in the construction, maintenance and operation of such projects unless provisions are made in connection therewith such as it feels are adequate and justified to protect and conserve the wildlife resources which would be affected.

In December, 1939, the Commission created the position of farm forester, in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service and Extension Service. Forester Arthur B. Meyer was taken off the Sam Baker forest fire protection district near Piedmont to become the state s first farm forester at Warrenton, with salary paid by the SCS and expenses paid by the Department.

Information Chief Townsend Godsey s education program for youngsters, the Nature Knights, got an assist from former Missourian Walt Disney, who volunteered to illustrate the printed materials used in the program, and the Commission was duly appreciative.

In March, 1940, it hired Faith Watkins, the first professional female employee of the Department, and placed her in charge of youth and women s programs. She was classified as a field service agent, but assigned to the Information Division; the other four field service agents were assigned to the Fish, Game and Forestry Division. Watkins, a graduate of the University of Michigan s School of Forestry and Conservation, had ten years experience in scout work and had been doing public relations work for the St. Louis City

This 1938 photo was captioned by photographer Dr. Paul Dalke **l-low** *NOT* to **Plant** *Fish. The photo was taken at Blackwell Lake in Indian Trail State Forest.*



Walt Disney *designed* **this** *pledge* **for Nature Knights** *Pages."* **A native of** *Marceline,* **Disney was** *already* **beginning to** *make his mark in the annals* **of** *entertainment when his* **familiar** *style graced* **this 1940s certificate.**

and County Council.

A generation of boys and girls grew up through the Nature Knights program, starting as Pages and working up through Squires, Knights and eventually to Conservationists, by doing various wildlife-enhancing projects on the land.

Godsey also secured permission to produce the Department s first motion picture, Back to ***Missouri.*** The theme was the effort of the Department to bring landowners and sportsmen together to benefit wildlife.

Godsey resigned his post in June, 1941, and Bode took the opportunity to reorganize the Department s education and information set-up. He created an Education Section and located it within the Administrative Division.

Dr. Forrest Olin Capps, 39, was hired as chief of the newly created Education Section. At the same time the Commission hired his assistant, Everett F. Evans.

Capps was originally from Worthington, Missouri, and had his bachelor of science degree from what is now Northeast Missouri State University. He received his master s and doctorate degrees from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He had been a teacher, principal and superintendent of schools before joining the Department. Evans, from Mt. Moriah, Missouri, was 29. He had his bachelor s degree from Maryville and his master s of education from Missouri University. It was while he was working on his master s degree that he developed the first conservation teachers manuals issued by the Department.

The Commission noted that, in creating an Education Section, the Commission recognizes the important part that education, particularly among schools and colleges, must have in the conservation program . . . ."

Replacing Godsey as head of the Information Division was 28-year-old Harold W. Clover. He had a degree in journalism from Washington University and experience as an advertising manager and editor. Assisting him

was 28-year-old Charles H. Callison who, although born in Canada, had been educated at Northeast Missouri State and University of Missouri-Columbia. He had been a newspaper editor in Kansas and Boonville.[1]

A major worry of the Commission during this period was the first of several attempts to repeal its constitutional amendment. In the 1939 legislative session, Representative Fred Spearman, a Miller County farmer, had introduced a bill calling for a vote to repeal Amendment 4. A more insidious attack came from State Senator William Quinn of Lewis County, who introduced a bill to repeal game and fish statutes formerly enacted by the legislature. This would also repeal the penalty sections, leaving the Commission with no way to enforce its regulations. Both of these bills were resoundingly defeated in the legislature when the Conservation Federation brought its power to bear on the solons.

Charles Callison, in his *Man and Wildlife in Missouri* quotes Wilbur Buford, a knowledgeable politician in his own right: I have been in politics all my life, but the pressure that was brought to bear on the legislature against the resolution was the most tremendous I have ever seen. The recently reactivated Federation was protecting its creation.

The support for such bills came from a variety of sources, according to Callison. Politicians simply didn t like the idea of a nonpolitical commission, and some resented the people by-passing the legislature via the initiative process.

Bode and his staff of zealous biologists were not universally accepted. Many sportsmen were reluctant to abandon traditional game and fish stocking as ways to perpetuate or increase wildlife. They thought Bode was a foreigner and his staff a bunch of impractical dreamers. They complained the Commission was too arbitrary and changed its rules too often.

Fortunately, a great many more citizens were willing to give the professionals a chance. When ex-State Senator A. L. McCawley paid a staff to collect 46,000 signatures for an initiative petition to repeal the regulations of the Commission and re-enact the old game and fish laws, Missourians voted it down on November 5, 1940, by better than two to one. But it gave the Commission and the Federation a scare.

F. Olin Capps became the first chief of Education Section in 1941, when Bode reorganized the information and education efforts following the resignation of Townsend Godsey.

While all this was going on, John Case s two-year term as a commissioner expired in July, 1939, and Springfield businessman Glen E. Stoner became the next appointee to the Commission.

When the State Supreme Court ruled that the Conservation Commission did indeed have the power to establish all regulations for wildlife and forestry, the staff and Commission set to work to create the best regulations they could.

Bode and Chairman Stephens went on the road, conducting meetings all over the state, to which were invited anyone who wanted to sound off on regulations or programs. Bode and Stephens told the assembly the biologists conclusions and recommenda-

1 This is the same Callison who in 1953 published the first history of the Conservation Federation of Missouri and the Department, *Man and Wildlife* in *Missouri.*

TURN ON MORE HEAT

Our Old Friend

SPEARMAN

Is Still At It

JOINT AND CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 16

Introduced by Representative Spearman. This resolution would submit a constitutional amendment to the qualified voters of Missouri at the general election in 1942 repealing the Conservation Amendment.

This is a deliberate attempt to again place the administration of natural and wildlife resources in the hands of politicians, in spite of the fact that Missouri citizens have overwhelmingly expressed themselves on several occasions regarding this matter.

This attack comes at a time when six other states are adopting Missouri s Conservation Amendment as a model. Can it be that the best is not good enough for the politicians, or is it too good?

Stop the threatened passage of this Resolution1

Make your letters a spring blizzard on Jefferson City. Each of you, individually, write your state senators and representatives. Tell them what you think of this Resolution.

Why waste another $75,000 of the taxpayers *money* because Spearman wants to?

Why subject the Commission to another period of trial and uncertainty?

Give the Commission its fair chance

Fred Spearman, a Miller County farmer and state legislator, *was one* of several instigators of efforts to *repeal the constitutional amendment* which *created the Commission. The* Conservation Federation *galvanized sentiment* against *the efforts, preserving the constitutional mandate.*

A cartoon by St. Louis artist **Wilton Willman** *on the cover* **of Missouri Wildlife** *magazine ridiculed yet another attempt to repeal Amendment 4. Missourians voted down the attempt by more than two to one.*

tions for regulations. There was a good deal of discussion, pro and con, which was useful to the pair. Out of all these meetings a set of regulations was formed that was published in January, 1940, as the *Wildlife and Forestry Code*. These regulations were the first that attempted to supersede all of the statutory provisions, except the penalty statutes. One notable inclusion was the requirement-for the first time-that women anglers have permits.

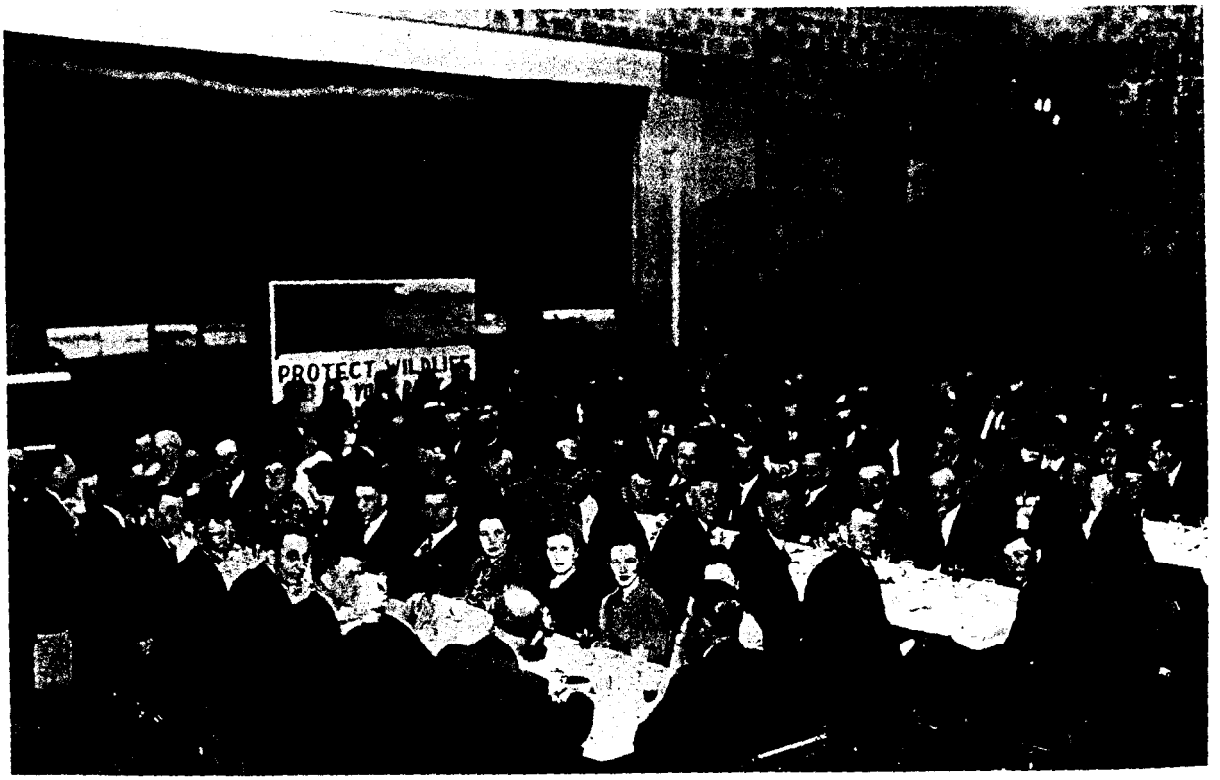
It is interesting to note the Commission s commitment to involve the public in regulations. Stephens and Bode agreed that unless regulations were understood and had public support, they were not likely to be observed. This early policy of getting public support for regulations continued. For a number of years Assistant Director Jay Morrow conducted annual meetings in various parts of the state to

solicit recommendations and to tell the public what biologists were recommending. These were finally abandoned during the 1950s, when attendance began to decline and the public perceived that the Department would handle things in the best interests of wildlife and the public.

A regulations committee was appointed to consider recommendations for regulations from employees and the public. Special interest groups were invited to regulations committee meetings to present their recommendations in order to promote public involvement in the process. All regulations correspondence from the public was handled by this committee and abridged copies sent to the commissioners. Essentially the same process is used today.

In January, 1941, the Commission took the Protection Section out of the Fish, Game and Forestry Division and made it a separate division. Later that year it decided that conservation agents could no longer collect a part of the fines assessed against convicted fish and game rule violators. Up to this time, agents were given a portion of the fines assessed, with an occasional payment for mileage in connection with a case. This was a modest little extra enjoyed by the agents, coffee money they called it. A report on a six-month period showed $1,503.30 in fees and $363.85 in mileage payments. Of forty agents and supervisors, only two reported no fees or mileage collected. Agent Frank I. Jones collected the most, with payments of $162 in fees and $175.70 in mileage on fifty-four cases prosecuted-a tidy sum in those days when an agent s salary was only $120 a month.

At first the Commission adopted the position that any such payments were subject to criticism and, if assessed at all, ought not go to the agents but to the Department. Later, it sent a recommendation to the courts that they reduce costs to the defendant in an amount equivalent to the fees earned by the



Public meetings like this one held at Irondale School in the early days of the Commission are a long-standing tradition within the Department. The meetings open the doors of communication for citizens to voice their concerns and Department personnel to explain the latest conservation efforts.

agents. It also suggested that prosecuting attorneys should encourage heavier fines in such cases. The Commission had increased agents salaries by $180 per year-from $1,440 to $1,620—and felt any additional fees were inappropriate.

The Commission also adopted a classification system for all employees, with commensurate salary scale.

In September, 1941, the Commission adopted a policy designating conservation agents as the official representatives of the Commission in connection with all of its activities in their respective districts.

This action reflected Bode s belief that an agent should be much more than a game warden, and imposed a special trust in the agents as a group within the Department.

Not all agents hailed the new responsibilities. Those oriented strictly to law enforcement resented having to take on the additional duties, but this was overcome.

A sidelight of the policy statement was that some agents interpreted it to mean that they were the representatives of the four-member Conservation Commission and not responsible to the administrative staff. This resulted from a curious semantic situation. Throughout its early history there was no distinction between the Department (the agency) and the Conservation Commission. Employees and the general public as well, referred to both as The Commission. If one took a narrow interpretation, as a few agents did, one might conclude that the statement referred only to the four-member Commission, not to the staff. This obviously was not the case. Agents were representatives of the Commission in the sense that they represented its programs as part of the entire staff.2

At the same meeting that established conservation agents as representatives of the Commission in all phases of its program, the Commission also decided to create a Master Conservationist Award, the highest honor it could confer upon citizens of the state who had accomplished exemplary conservation work. A committee was created to consider nominations for such an award, though this program didn t get under way until 1942.

As early as 1940 the Commission was beginning to worry about the effects of the military draft which began that year. It adopted a policy of promising a job-though not necessarily the same job-to anyone called into service.

A year later, in a show of patriotism, the Commission decreed that servicemen stationed in Missouri would be given resident hunting and fishing privileges; the policy continues to this day.

On the other hand, the probability of war was in the air. The Commission was concerned about a possible paper shortage and ordered Bode to get the next years permits printed as quickly as possible to offset the anticipated shortage. The Commission also ordered him to stockpile some automobile tires-probably not the most patriotic decision, and it was later disallowed.

Their worries about war turned out to be valid. The regular monthly meeting of the Conservation Commission was scheduled for December 8, 1941. The minutes of that meeting read:

> The Director brought up for consideration the proposed budget for 1942 . . . . and in view of the national emergency and the possible effect on the income of the Department during the coming year, asked the Commission to consider carefully the fact that the proposed budget might result in using up much of the reserve fund unless the revenues remained the same as in the previous year.
>
> Consideration of the budget was temporarily suspended to listen to the following

2 Missouri state government, at various times, had a legal "Department of Conservation" which included the Conservation Commission and its employees, but also included other agencies assigned to it by the governor. For many years the State Park Board was considered to be a part of the state's "Department of Conservation," along with the Conservation Commission and the Moses Austin Memorial Committee. When the Lewis and Clark Trail Committee and the Mississippi Parkway Commission were assigned to the State Park Board they, too, were part of the "Department of Conservation." In 1974, with reorganization of state government and creation of a Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Conservation officially came to mean the staff and employees of the Conservation Commission. The four-member Commission was the legal head of the Department and, under law, a part of it.

speech of the President of the United States, which was broadcast over a national [radio] hookup at 11:30 a.m.:

Yesterday, December 7, 1941-a date that will live in infamy-the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan . . . .'"

Bettye Hornbuckle, secretary to the Commission, took down every word of the speech and included it in the minutes. Reading over the old document, one can almost hear the cultured, richly resonant tones of Franklin D. Roosevelt as he asked Congress to recognize that a state of war existed between the United States and Japan.

That war was to have its effect on the conservation programs of Missouri in many ways.